



Leadership at Pine Grove

At Pine Grove Bible Church, our leadership team of elders is served by another team - the deacons. All groups and ministries at Pine Grove are ultimately accountable to the elders, and in things pertaining to finances and the church building to the deacons.

Who are the elders?

The elders board (or "the elders") is responsible for the spiritual health and well-being of the Pine Grove congregation. They are a group of men who provide spiritual leadership and direction to the church; they oversee church teaching, address doctrinal and Scriptural issues as they arise, set the overall direction of the church, and act as Pine Grove's representatives in the wider Christian community. They also perform spiritual events within the church such as marriages and dedications.

How are elders chosen?

For starters, our criteria and sources of inspiration for eldership rest in Scripture. The guidelines in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2, for example, give us a taste of what is expected of elders: above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, hospitable, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, and able to teach. Key, however, is a love and reverence for Scripture. To quote from Titus 2, an elder "... must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

In seeking new elders, the existing eldership will from time to time prayerfully look across the congregation, and seek out those men who are already unofficially fulfilling the roles of eldership in their daily walk with Christ. The eldership will then pray for and about these people over a period of time. If we feel the Lord's affirmation of our initial thoughts, we will approach these men and their spouses about the possibility of eldership.

We approach potential elders discretely, and never exert any pressure to respond right away. We encourage a prayerful consideration; this process of affirmation could be immediate, or could take weeks or months. We would rather the right elder in God's time than the wrong elder in ours.

If the potential elder says 'yes', we bring the name to the wider congregation for prayer and input, and solicit opinion over a period of a few weeks. If an issue of concern arises, or if there is hesitation, we will explore the issue with discretion.

What happens after a potential elder says yes?

If the potential elder agrees to serve, and if the congregation expresses its support, the elder and his spouse are brought before the congregation and prayed over. They are then affirmed for a one year 'trial period' to measure the calling with the actual work of an elder. At the completion of that year, all elders – old and new - will discuss whether they feel confirmation in that initial calling. If in discussion all elders agree that continuation is the Lord's will, the elder will continue serving.

Do elders have terms?

All elders serve for an initial one-year trial period. After confirming the Lord's calling to eldership, each elder will serve for an additional three years. After the end of this fourth year, every elder will take a minimum one year pause or sabbatical, during which they will be expected to step away from the elders' table, and serve within Pine Grove as they feel lead.

After this sabbatical, and with the agreement of the serving eldership, the elder on sabbatical will return to serve for another three years.

These terms and sabbaticals are all managed in an environment of brotherly care and compassion. We share our elders' table responsibilities as a team, and will always support our brothers when there is a need for rest.

How do elders make decisions?

The elders approach each issue they face with the desire to honour our Lord – not only in the decision, but in how the decision is made. The elders will therefore approach each issue with a reliance on Scripture, a heart for prayer, and a yearning for guidance from the Holy Spirit. We discuss issues before us in a spirit of brotherly love and respect – for both each other, and our respective walks with God.

The elders firmly believe in unanimity, and in the importance of consensus in any decision. Our desire for unity stems from a desire to reflect – to the best fallen beings can – the unanimity of the Body of Christ. With this heart and desire, it consistently surprises us how often the solutions to difficult issues are revealed by our Lord.

There are times, however, when an issue may not appear clear cut, and there are differing views. When there is disagreement, we pray about the issue collectively and individually, and wait to see where the Lord may lead us. The Lord – time after time – has used these pauses to reveal details to us that may have been lost in the moment, bringing the elders to a new and deeper understanding of not only the issue, but of His will, purpose and desire.

Can I speak with an elder, or the elders as a whole?

The elders are not only leaders, but fellow believers, and we have an obligation to our brothers and sisters to do what we can to encourage and help. If there is a personal or prayer issue you'd like to discuss with an elder, you can approach an elder you feel comfortable with and share with him in full confidentiality.

The elders are also open to collectively discussing church issues with you. All we ask for is a summary of the issue beforehand, to give us time to prepare and pray.